

ABSTRACT

The present invention provides a buckle and tongue combination for restraining an occupant in a seat, the buckle and tongue combination. The combination includes a housing, a frame located within the housing, two pawls disposed upon the frame, each pawl having a distal end and a proximal end, each distal end having a release abutment extending from the respective pawl, a hinge pin disposed at the proximal end of each pawl for pivotally coupling the pawls to the frame, a tongue adapted to be disposed adjacent the two pawls, the tongue interlockingly engages the pawls, a biasing member disposed within the housing, the biasing member engages the pawls urging the pawls to a locked position with respect to the adjacent tongue and a release button slidably secured along the frame, the release button biased in a first or locked position, the release button having at least one inclined abutment surface which engages the release abutments and urges the two pawls towards an unlocked position when the release button is urged toward a second position opposite from the first position, whereby the user is able to release the tongue from the buckle upon depressing the release button toward the second or unlocked position.

In one embodiment, the tongues include a molded portion and an alignment key so as to assure proper orientation of the tongue with the housing. In addition, the housing includes an ejector contact pad which acts against the alignment key to eject the tongues. The contact pad is finished so as to provide an aesthetic appearance. In another embodiment, the tongue may comprise a single tongue rather than dual tongues. Still further, another embodiment provides overlapping tongues wherein a first tongue includes a pawl spreader and a second tongue includes a pawl lock.